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AN EPISTLE TO FRIENDS And Tender Minded People IN *AMERICA*:

Being an Exhortation of Brotherly Love to them to prize the Favours and Mercies which the Lord has been pleased to Extend unto them.

By BENJAMIN HOLMS.

2 Peter Chap. i. ver. 5. *And besides this, giving all diligence, add to your faith virtue, and to virtue, knowledge.*

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BRITISH MUSEUM

An EPISTLE *to* FRIENDS *and tender People in* America.

DEAR Friends, whom the Lord in the riches of his Love has gathered and raiſed up to be Witneſſes for his Name and Truth in thoſe remote Parts of the World; I hereby tenderly ſalute you with Deſires that you may anſwer the great and good End of the Lord therein, that you may be as Lights and Way-marks amongſt the People, where your Lots are caſt; the manifold Bleſſings and Preſervations which many of you have been favoured with, ought to be a deep and ſtrong Obligation upon you to walk in great Humility and Fear before the Lord, while you have a Being here.

It ought to be remembred with great Thankfulneſs, how wonderfully many of you that are Inhabitants in *New-England*, and ſome other parts

of thoſe Countries were preſerv'd, when the Lord ſuffer'd many of your Neighbours to fall by the Hands of the Savage *Indians*.

I greatly deſire that the ſenſe of his great Love and Mercy every way extended unto you, may engage you to walk as becomes your holy Profeſſion; that ſo you may ſhew forth Chriſtianity in the purity of it. And, dear Friends, let the Spirit of the Lord Jeſus Chriſt bear Rule in all your Hearts, that you may be as a Family of Love, in which there is no jar, that it may be manifeſt that you are indeed the Diſciples and Followers of Chriſt; and keep your ſelves pure and unſpotted in all reſpects, that you may ſhew forth the unſpotted Life, ſo will you preach for the Lord in your Generation, and be as Saviours upon Mount *Sion*; and as there is a tender People in many parts of that Wilderneſs Countries, to whom there is a merciful Viſitation extended from the Lord, I deſire that you may ſpeak convincingly to them by your Good and Holy Living; that they may have to

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ſay of a Truth, that you are a People that lives a Life of Chriſtianity; for many have gotten the Saints and holy Mens words in their Mouths, that are out of the Life and Spirit which they were in. And it is becauſe hereof that many of them called Chriſtians, are ſo full of Envy and Hatred one againſt another; but let that Spirit bear Rule in all your Hearts, which can forgive Enemies, and do good againſt Evil; this was the Mind which was in the Lord Jeſus Chriſt, when he was about to be offered up upon the Croſs; he ſaid, *Father forgive them*: And when the People were about to Stone holy *Stephen* to Death, he ſaid, *Lord lay not this Sin to their Charge.* Here the forgiving Spirit appeared; Men in the Unregenerate State are ready to render Injury for Injury, and Reviling, for Reviling; but ſee that you learn of him, *Who when he was reviled, reviled not again.*

And, dear Friends, let the condeſcending Spirit which was in *Abraham* the Friend of God be in you, that you may not differ one with

another about Land and Worldly Things; for when his and *Lott*'s Herds-men differ'd, he was for having no difference, but he was willing to take either hand. And how wonderfully did the Lord bleſs *Abraham* in that condeſcending Spirit; which Spirit has appeared in many of our good Friends, in which they have been greatly bleſt. I can ſay I bear great good will to you in thoſe Wilderneſs-Countries, and greatly deſire that you may be preſerv'd from all Evil and Hurtful Things, that you may be Members of that pure Church which Chriſt came to preſent to God without Fault.

I deſire that you young Men and Women that are growing up, may be careful to keep your ſelves pure and unſpotted in all reſpects; and it may pleaſe the Lord to Anoint many of you to preach the Goſpel of Life and Salvation to many People; and as it has pleaſed the Allwiſe God to remove many in them Parts that were good Inſtruments in his Hand in their Generation, it would be great Rejoycing to many that Travels for the

the welfare of *Sion*, to ſee you that are of a ſucceeding Stock, called forth, and ſtanding in a holy Zeal for the Truth; and if you faithfully ſerve the Lord, he that has greatly bleſs'd many of your Good and pious Parents, will bleſs you.

And, dear Friends, I deſire that you may be very much concerned to keep up and maintain good Order in the Church, that ſo all wrong Things, and falſe Liberty may be kept from among you, and that a due and tender Regard may be had to the poor Widows and Fatherleſs, and them that are in Want; and where any that makes profeſſion with us are likely to be drawn away with looſe Company, let them be Tenderly Adviſed and Dealt with; that if poſſible, they may be preſerv'd from bringing Diſhonor to the Truth, and Ruine upon themſelves.

And I deſire that all ſuch may hearken to the Lord's Counſel in themſelves, and through his People. It would have been happy for the People of *Iſrael*, if they had obey'd the Call of God by the Prophets; but becauſe

they rejected his Counſel through them, and would not be reclaimed from their Evil doings, therefore he turned his Hand in Judgment againſt them.

As the Lord has conſern'd many of his Servants to Travel as with their Lives in their Hands to Viſit you, and call to you to walk in holy Fear before him, I deſire that you may live in a thankful ſenſe of his Kindneſs and Mercy to you herein; for if now when the Lord has raiſed many of you from a low Condition, and has greatly bleſs'd your Endeavours, and preſerv'd you in a wonderful manner, you ſhould prove forgetful, and go into thoſe things that provokes him; how juſt may it be with the Lord to puniſh you, by ſuffering your Enemies to make a Prey upon you.

But I am ſatisfy'd, there is a People amongſt you, that are deeply humbled under a ſenſe of the great Love and Mercy of God to them who are conſern'd, that they may be found walking in well pleaſing before him, while they have a Being here; to all ſuch my Spirit is united

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in a near manner, and I fervently desire that he that was *Abram*'s Shield, and exceeding great Reward, may be with you, and preserve you to his Praise and Glory, while you have a Being here.

And, dear young People, whom the Lord has inwardly reach'd unto, and brought to partake of his Love and Goodness, I desire that you may retain that holy Sense of his Love which you have receiv'd, that thereby you may be prevail'd upon to follow the Lord fully; and if you are faithful to the Requirings of Truth, you may be eminently Serviceable in your Generation, as many of our worthy Elders were, that are now removed: Oh! that it might please the Lord to raise up many faithful Labourers in those Countries, and send them into his great Harvest, that many may be gathered to *Shilo* the peaceable Saviour, the Lord Jesus Christ, to whom the gathering of the People is to be; I tenderly desire that you that have been mercifully Visited, may dwell in Heart with the Lord, that you may be preserved from all the Snares

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and Temptations of the Enemy, that envies your Happineſs, for none are longer ſafe than they keep upon their Watch; the Strong and Wiſe, and them that has known good things, has fallen through unwatchfulneſs; but ſuch is the Love and Mercy of God to Mankind, that he has given ſo much of his Grace as is ſufficient to keep them from Falling and Sinning, as they take heed thereunto, for all the Miſcarriages that is amongſt Mankind, is owing to their neglect of the Grace and good Spirit of God in their own Hearts.

The Apoſtle *Paul* declares 1 *Cor.* 12. *That the manifeſtation of the Spirit is given to every Man to profit withal*; in which every one hath his proper Gift: And therefore, dear Friends, as you have receiv'd a divine Gift from the Lord, ſee that you make a right Improvement of it; that like the good and faithful Servant ſpoken of in the Parable, that had improv'd their Talents, you may be wellcom'd with the comfortable Reward of *Well done*; that when you leave this World, it may be a happy Change to you; and

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that none of you may be found like the ſlothful Servant that had neglected to improve his Talent.

I can ſay I am ſincere in my Deſires that you may by your holy and humble walking anſwer the great Love and Mercy of God every way extended unto you; that *Men ſeeing your good Works, may have cauſe to Glorifie God on your behalf.*

And I deſire that you may be Examples of Humility and Plainneſs, and in your Trading and Dealing, and whole Converſation be careful that you anſwer your Holy Profeſſion. And I would have you zealouſly concern'd to keep up your Religious Meetings, both on Firſt and Week-days; and as much as you well can, endeavour that your Children and Servants may attend ſuch Meetings; and as many of you have been made greatly Inſtrumental for the good of your Children, through your Love and Care to keep them out of hurtful and looſe-minded Company, and from vain Faſhions, which leads away the Mind from the Lord; I deſire that you may continue the ſame

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Care over them; and, dear Children, as you desire that a Blessing may attend you, have a tender Regard to your Parents and good Friends Councel. And as it has often laid a great foundation for Strife and Discord, where such as have profess'd the Truth with us, have gone out to Marry with them of another Profession of Religion; I tenderly desire that you may seek to the Lord to direct you in this great Concern of Marriage.

And you Tender People that do not profess to be of our Society, to whom there is a Hand of Love and Mercy stretch'd forth from the Almighty, in order that you may be gather'd to the great and good Shepherd of *Israel*, the Lord Jesus Christ, that has laid down his Life for his Sheep; it was the wonderful Love and Mercy of God to Mankind, that he was pleased to send the Son of his dear Love, to taste Death for every Man, and to be a Propitiation for the Sins of the whole World, 1 Epist. *John*, Chap. ii. 2. that so all Men through him might be reconciled and brought into Favour with

with God again; and he has ſent his Spirit into their Hearts to lead them to himſelf again. And I tenderly deſire that all into whoſe Hands theſe may come, may take heed to that good Spirit of God which convinces you of Sin, and inwardly reproves you for it; that thereby you may know an overcoming of thoſe Things which are Evil; for it is certain there is Power in the Divine Light to give Men a Sight and Diſcovery of that which is Evil; and alſo to enable them to Reſiſt and Overcome it; and therefore it is that we endeavour to direct and turn Mens Minds to that true Light ſpoken of *John* 1. 9. *which Lighteth every Man that cometh into the World*; and all the Nations of them that are found walking in this holy Light ſhall be Saved. This Light will let Men ſee the by Paths and crooked ways in which they have gone in their fallen and degenerate State; and as they come to walk therein, they will witneſs acceſs to God, and know inward Communion with him; which you

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and the Children of Men in an Universal manner may be brought to the Experience of; is the the sincere Desire of your Loving Friend,

BENJAMIN HOLMS.

London, the 2d of the
7*th* Month, 1721.

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